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Overcoming Post-War Traumas and Conflicts through Dialogue in Distributed Cognition

ABSTRACT

The following paper presents a proposal of a theoretical foundation for an application of distributed cognition in overcoming post-war traumas and related social conflicts. The distributed cognition theory states that the cognitive system is a structure distributed between internal-mental and external-objective social world representations across time and space. The basic issue of dialogue in distributed cognition is that distribution as information dissemination in each cognitive component functions in a systemic integrity. The presented perspective of overcoming traumas and war conflicts through dialogue refers to the following aspects of human activity: 1 – the perception of an environment as a construct of own life path and self-image; 2 – active creation of a desired world, life space and desired self; 3 – agentic cognitive mapping of an environment as a real, virtual and potential life space; 4 – a way of elastic control over an environment through discovering objectively present environmental affordances; 5 – achieving agency through discovering possibilities for action rather than barriers; 6 – making the cognitive system more flexible through a change in style of thinking to a constant state of openness to new meanings and values.

KEYWORDS: trauma, therapy culture, post-traumatic stress, distributed cognition, dialogue

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INTRODUCTION: MEMORY AND REMEMBERENCE OF WAR

Contemporary issues presented in the article stem from unresolved problems of the past with the list being rather long. Firstly, European societies are still trying to overcome the psychological aftermath of the last war. As is proven by Peter Sloterdijk (2009) wars do not end in a single moment but rather transition into post-war periods, which Tony Judt (2008) describes as 'post-war syndromes'. The aftermath creates a rather consistent cycle that does not end with an ever-lasting peace but an evolving process of redefining ideal well-being (Bakarat, Zyck, 2009). During the period that immediately follows after a war the ideal well-being can mean an ability of individuals to overcome life difficulties and pursuing health and minimal happiness through breaking away from traumatic war events (Lorion, 2000). However the vision of happiness in later periods becomes a mental construct that is more and more detached from the initial war reality as an effect of implementing gradual post-traumatic stress coping mechanisms (Lis-Turlejska, 1998). During war and immediate post-war periods overcoming stress is achieved through psychological repression and activities that are aimed at repairing physical war damages and are a great way of preoccupying one's mind with day-to-day tasks rather than past, traumatic experiences.

One of the factors that moderates reactions to war events, both during and immediately after the war, is a matter of time, specifically lack thereof in the life of an individual. War events and their immediate effects, though objectively and subjectively tragic, require from people concentrating their mental energy on solving actual day-to-day problems. The preoccupation with now as a requirement of the war-time losses and the need to rebuild and repair distorts how the past is being experienced. Sharp war images and affective experiences transition into a state of numbness, pushing attention from retrospective memory towards prospective memory as a more functional way of coping with

the day-to-day. In the immediate aftermath of war people tend to pay attention towards recovering from it as a way of securing the future. They are mindful about what needs to be done rather than what happened.

Thus, in the immediate aftermath of war, people's mental life is preoccupied with the imperative of survival and day-to-day problems. That is why the psychological processes engaged in the now are not filled with ruminating about the past. The focus and mental experiences of the post-war period are concentrated on direct information and content, which assimilation in the psyche and social life is rather conflictless internally and socially. Answering the war trauma by engaging in work and the day-to-day is a valid therapy. Obviously the matter changes the more distant the point between war and peace becomes. The reality that emerges over time is less real in relation to past war events and becomes an ongoing psychological construct of individuals and societies. Over time war becomes more unreal, which in turn lowers the effectiveness of absorbing the experienced traumas through day-to-day activities. As a result of this cause-effect spiral the mental reality construct of individuals and societies in relation to war as the primary reason becomes irrational.

This irrational mental construct is systematically subject to various complicated narrations (Nordstrom, 1997). Trauma narrations of the post-war period increasingly complicate the mental normalization processes and interfere with constructing visions of coming back to normalcy as a certain ideal well-being. As a result of an increasing discrepancy in the visions of coming back to normalcy at an individual, national and international level communicating it gets all the more complicated. The variety in visions of ideal well-being as a means of repairing the damages of war often leads to a monologue instead of a dialogue. Creating enemies and hostility becomes autonomous, which in turn leads to creating new barriers and the reemergence of war demons instead of forming a common view of the world between indi-

viduals and nations. Moreover, the post-war traumas are inherited and passed on through generations, which makes them detached from reality becoming a mental meta-reality of fear, suspicion and conflicts (Coser 2009, Kramer 2008).

The first important example of unsolved problems of the post-war period are forced relocations and expulsions that to this day are a major post-war trauma. These mass relocations of a multitude of ethnic groups were not only a change in their social space environment but also a forced construction of a social space in a new geographical reality and a mental reconstruction of the lost social space (Melendy 2006; Macdonald 2009). Expulsions do not cause a complete loss of the former space but only the part responsible for the construction of a physical foundation for social framework in a given place. Because of expulsions the old place and social space still exist but mostly in memories of people making an excellent ground for idealization, reconstruction and repeated appropriation.

Another important example of post-war issues that keep on recurring as post-war trauma is damage in urban planning, architecture and art caused by war. The barbaric destruction of Warsaw by the Germans can be compared with the destruction of Carthage, since the scope of devastation prevented any form of reconstruction and bringing back the former order both physically and socially. For a lot of people the world of their youth has been abruptly closed leaving a sense of longing to at least see it resurrected virtually. In Tomasz Gomoła's film "Warszawa 1935" the virtual city not only brings back the lost collective memory, but also brings back to life and constructs ambitions, pride of the society and nation that was able to build such a great city. Architecture reconstruction in a social reality is not always a source of a unifying social space, because as the example of the Royal Castle in Poznań shows, the restitution of it from war-time damage can be a source of social conflict reaching a point of a symbolic war (Bańka, 2011).

The third example of unsolved post-war problems and traumas is the issue of defining the perpetrator of evil, the victim, the matter of who has a clear conscience and reconciliation. Establishing the perpetrator and victim immediately after the war was an easy task, however in the trans-generational trauma inheritance the same issue ceases to be an objective fact and becomes generated in the mind that is imposed as the truth in the social reality. This happens among other things because in the human psyche the need to clear ones conscience leads to getting rid of guilt by the perpetrator followed by assigning vile deeds to the victim. This is why the German mini-series produced by ZDF in 2013 – "Unsere Mütter, Unsere Väter" – depicts the Polish soldiers from the Home Army as the perpetrators of the Holocaust and soldiers of the SS and Wehrmacht as innocent statists. It is a classic example of constructing 'collective innocence', first through creating a work of 'art' in the collective mind to brand perpetrators and victims, followed by popularizing this new 'truth' in the social reality on national and international levels (Wheen, 2009).

The unsolved problem with roots in a long ago war still remains labelling as inheriting inferiority or superiority complexes. As far as inferiority complexes always lead to an effort in curing them, superiority complexes on the other hand are very rarely treated, since they often remain hidden just to reemerge in all their destructive power. The best example is discovered and analyzed for the first time by Bartky (1996) in relation to a traditional upbringing of women, the so-called pedagogy of shame. Today the pedagogy of shame is translated into every sphere of human mental existence, being the primary strategy of dialoguing through monologue, meaning the positioning of an opposite side as an enemy and hostile.

The unsolved problems of the past have very serious consequences. Firstly, people's minds underwent a periodical activation of psychological mechanisms of creating and recreating visions of happiness that were pursued at the expense of other social

groups. Secondly, an unfulfilled task of accounting for guilt and war crimes eventually leads to a gradual rewrite of history, where facts that were real events in a social space become indistinguishable from facts that are mental constructs. Thirdly, a systematic replacement of a real conflict with an unreal conflict takes place (Coser, 2009), which is followed by supplanting rational factors by irrational thinking in the mental space. Finally, a total reconstruction of the actual social space takes place and an intentional construction of a new space that fulfills new goals generated in the process of clearing conscience, building a 'just' vision of happiness and ideal well-being without any cause-effect links to the actual social reality.

In the following part of the article an analysis of solving the aforementioned problems from a perspective of psychological mechanisms that lie underneath shall be presented. Psychological mechanisms analysis of constructing and reconstructing social space in a mental space proves that the ceaseless pursuit of happiness can be presented in two theoretical models – reactive and prospective. The reactive model defines the pursuit of happiness as a series of reactions and affective-therapeutic actions, which function is overcoming the past in relation with space-time reality of the social framework of life. Whereas the prospective mode defines the pursuit of happiness as a series of mental operations that preempt the future, which function is a free use of facts from the past as justifications for creating the *a priori* future and social space embedded inside of it.

CONSTRUCTION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF POST-WAR TRAUMAS AND CONFLICT IN AFFECTIVE-THERAPEUTIC MODE

The psychological and social effects of war are always long-lasting, as well as have an ability to evolve and assume new forms (Bowlby, 1973; Wheen, 2009). The observations of Bowlby

(1973) and Ainsworth et al. (1978) about the destructive effect of war on attachment between people resulted in forming one of the most important psychological theories, the attachment theory. Each post-war period marks a critical moment in the evolution of normalization and constructing a vision of ideal well-being and happiness. In each of these periods a different moral grammar is present and a different affective-therapeutic narration is dominant (Nordstrom, 1997; Seeman, 1971). This is visible in the way notions like enemy, alienation and strangeness are defined. The evolution of the post-war syndrome is about constant category construction and reconstruction of a stranger and strangeness in ceaseless attempts of grasping the essence of ideal well-being and defining true happiness. In every post-war period people experience ideal happiness differently and have a different vision of ideal well-being. The way of identifying such phenomenon in the everyday experience becomes a way of recognizing an individual's and social group's achievements in the area of normalization and mental health.

The paradox of the post-war period comes from the fact that the psychological effects of war are inherited trans-generationally and emotions related to the memory of war are often times stronger in generations that had no direct contact with the immediate and original effects of war (Sakai, 2009). The constant cultural change is reflected in the consciousness of people seeking new identity patterns and meanings. Unfortunately, it comes down to rumination of the experienced injustices as a link between self and the environment. This ability of our times has been defined as emotional capital by E. Illouz (2007).

Societies and individuals suffering from the post-war trauma are afflicted by a specific ambiguity, characterized by an inner struggle in categories of real and potential well-being, in relation to both an immediate and distant social surrounding. It is manifested by an unconscious and automatic creation of enemies, as

well as constructing alienation states be it to oneself, other people, own environment or significant meanings of everyday life.

In the modern societies the reasons for experiencing alienation (Seeman, 1971) and creating enemies are complex. These processes are linked with an increasing social complexity, multitude of choices, technology, urbanization and bureaucracy. Alienation is however the biggest problem in societies afflicted by post-war trauma, because it is still a vital indicator of normalcy. In Europe each society has a different experience of war, the extent of war memory and the need to account for it in the sphere of coherence and self-identity continuity (Judt, 2008). The Holocaust of the Polish nation (Lukas, 2012) did not end together with the German occupation since for the majority of Poles one occupation had been supplanted with another. They had to wait till 1989, which became a symbolic date of regaining freedom.

Traumas as an effect of conflicts between states and nations define the enemy and alien from various perspectives. Germans as the main perpetrators of war positioned aliens invoking the resentment (Sloterdijk, 2008). Aliens were everyone who in the minds of the society were guilty of humiliating Germany after World War I, amongst others – Jews and Poles. The process of forming aliens by excluding perpetrators assumed an epic nature (Sloterdijk, 2009) in the minds of Germans. Thus, a false consciousness was created in the German society that pointed at offenders of their own tragedies as well as alienating them from most of their neighbors. At the affective level creating enemies and alienating partners is associated with an escalation of hostility and extreme hatred (Coser, 2009).

Even though alienation of people categorized as enemies is defined almost entirely in relation to the aggressor, in the case of some national groups alienation from their own ethnicity is a self-alienation. This phenomenon is known as *self-hating*, meaning a hatred towards own ethnic group and is an effect of a pathological difference of opinions in relation to a sense of identity inside

an ethnic group and is a reaction to being part of a discriminated group (Lewin, 1940/1997; Finlay, 2005). The hostility syndrome towards own ethnic group or 'ethnophobia' is a reaction towards outside discrimination by other ethnic groups as well as conflicts caused by it inside the group (Monteith & Winters, 2002; Robinson & Wilkowski, 2006). Nowadays the *self-hating* and 'ethnophobia' phenomenons can be observed in every society, starting with Jews (Segev, 2012), Poles (Szatkowski, 2012) and ending with Japanese (Kersten, 2009) and Americans (Hollander, 1992).

The period after a severe trauma is for normal people a time of psychological self-regulation and a return to psychological equilibrium. In various groups and societies the process of coping with stress is different (Lis-Turlejska, 1998). As pointed out by Peter Sloterdijk (2009) from the perspective of cultural self-regulation the post-war periods are a process of social and cultural normalization deformed during war. It means that for the main actors of the conflict it is a time of reckoning both for the defeated and the victors.

Mental constructions of justifications for the result of the conflict is an important factor conditioning self-perception and defining what it means to be a victor or the defeated in the mental space as well as social-cultural space. Unsurprisingly both parties do not attribute the same facts to being victorious or defeated (Riding, 2012). In Europe individual and cultural levels of reckoning sometimes overlap, but in most cases are separate. Even though on the level of psychological reactions everyone counts their losses according to a similar standard of pain and suffering, the cultural level balance is falsified at the very beginning by an arbitrary and intentional definition of who is the victor and who is the defeated. One example of such paradox could be observed in Italy, when after the assassination of Mussolini, a false social consciousness was created that Italy was part of the Allied forces (Oliva, 2006). Another example happened in Israel after the war where seven million Jewish survivors from

the Holocaust were categorized as guilty of their fate and stigmatized by the shockingly contemptuous label – 'soap' ('sabon' in Hebrew) (Segev, 2012). The mechanism of cleansing consciences and constructing justifications for the results of war is different for the victors and defeated. Germans, as the losing side, followed a path called 'metanoia' (Sloterdijk, 2009), whereas French as the victorious side, followed a path of 'affirmation'. 'Metanoia' is a process of recovering equilibrium and health following a war, during which a process of re-evaluation of normative stances being part of the metanoethical syndrome as the cause of war takes place. As is known in the case of Germany it was the Weimar syndrome as the cause and effect of defeat. Hence, metanoia is not only a simple allocation of blame and responsibility but also a specific way of defining moral grammar in relation to "what next?". The French way to psychological equilibrium and diffusion of post-war trauma through affirmation was a process of constructing justifications as well as stimulating the imagination to create a vision of being victors, despite facts, common sense and even the dominating in society state of mind (Sloterdijk, 2009; Riding, 2012). Put in the objectively far from obvious role of victors, the French had to reconstruct their social surroundings to such, in which they emerge from war not as collaborators and co-participants of the Holocaust, but innocent as lambs creators of the new moral world order (Riding, 2012).

In Poland, positioned in a schizophrenic role of neither victors nor defeated, processes of normalization and returning to equilibrium came to a standstill. Who and how positioned others in alien categories depended on whichever perspective was used (Gross, 2001; Zaremba, 2012). Objective facts and actions had little to do with the truth because facts were replaced by words (Mannet, 2008). The complete shift in evaluation criteria of actions and stances in the post-war period have led to constructing alienation in opposition to all possible processes: communization of the country, reconciliation, sense of patriotism, sense of de-

cency, good and evil. When patriotism, struggle for dignity and physical survival became a crime, whereas crime became an act of heroism for which monuments were erected, people were at a loss on how to define sense of life and sense of war. The feeling of betrayal, humiliation and abandonment closed the minds of Poles in a schizophrenic trap with repercussions still present in the modern day. Examples of this are visible in the recurring dispute over the PKiN ('Palace of Culture and Science'), the monument of the 'three sleepers' in Praga district of Warsaw or the sign 'im. Lenina' ('The Lenin Shipyard') on the Gdańsk shipyard's main entrance.

Every memory fades with time passing and the further away from the original event and actual reality, the more information is added to it. Images of conflict lose their status of actual events in favor of events constructed in the mind. An actual conflict is replaced by an unreal conflict (Coser, 2009) and the retrospective memory gives way to prospective memory, which means that in the social consciousness an ever-growing dominance of duties towards the future rather than moral obligation resulting from the past can be observed. In the new collective and individual memory defining aliens and strangeness becomes an increasingly abstract endeavor based not on a bivalent logic, but on a fuzzy set of heuristics. Black and white categories of us and them are replaced by fuzzy categories in which everyone can be an enemy depending on who is placed under such category. This way a fascist does not have to be an Italian, a German does not have to be a Nazi and a Nazi does not have to be a national socialist. In the unreal conflict being a continuation of a real conflict aggression is being transferred to a substitute object. In this fuzzy set logic what is true and false, what is good and evil eludes definite categorizations (Noworol, 2013; Schneider, 2001).

After achieving a basic, satisfactory level of normalization in the everyday life and grasping a basic psychological equilibrium, Europe transitioned from economic reconstruction to social space

construction at a supranational level in the form of European-isation. This idea can be characterized by an aim to create new thought patterns of happiness, morality and quality of human relations. The memory of the primary cause of war, related to the Weimar syndrome – still strong amongst the political elites – dictated a redefinition of the term 'postwar homeland'. It was recognized that the condition to prevent future war catastrophes is to meld the term 'homeland' into supranational structures of a higher order.

Constructed during the preceding post-war normalization period categories of enemy and strangeness became dysfunctional. Europeanization as an alternative for the postwar homeland converts former enemies into a quasi-community of a yet undefined 'European identity'. Repositioning the identities of former victors and defeated towards a common identity based around pragmatic ideas of a common goal was a realistic approach. A strong national identity facing an effective socialization of people and mentalities is weakened giving way to a 'common good' ideology. The benefits of a social super-state and supranational integration were clearly visible for the common people and lead to an acceptance and universalization of European values. European Community structures are perceived as friendly, pragmatic and bringing its citizens closer to an ideal well-being through increasing the quality of life. However, this situation changed when the pragmatic integration transitioned into a political project aimed at constructing a European superstate machine.

The project of Europeanization contraposed to the 'American way of life' faced with the fall of the Soviet bloc required a fundamental reform of ideal well-being and quality of life concepts. The fall of the former international order as a preserved post-war state disturbed peace, stagnation and the vision of growth. Old Europe is rejoined by the central and eastern part of the continent, called the 'New Europe', no longer separated by the Iron Curtain. For Germany it means reunification, thus turning back from the path

of 'metanoia' and revisiting the 'metanoethical' path, messianistic in nature. Unifying a country cannot be done without thinking in national categories of 'homeland', which are however contradictory to the principal of supranational integration. Post-communist European order requires a refitting on the international level, which for Germany, for instance, requires repositioning their identity from an abstraction embedded in the pan-European space towards a more egoistic national space (homeland), whereas for Poland it is completely opposite.

The fall of the Berlin Wall in Europe marked a symbolic beginning of constructing European borders anew and defining their permeability for friends and foes. And even though the fall of communism was declared as the end of history (Fukuyama, 1992), actually it was the return to it magnified by the new 'Migration Period' from Islamic countries. A novelty in reckoning narrations is the fact that people who have not experienced war themselves but engaged in it on an almost paranoiac level emotionally, decided to voice their opinions on the effects of war (Robins, Post, 1999). It is a deviation from the minimal common denominator of war images categorized as 'anomaly' towards completely divergent images of war as normalcy 'awry'. Common memory splits into competing fragments. Those who want to remember and treat the past according to historical facts are contemptuously called the last Polish and English anti-German enclaves of pathological emotions in Europe by, for example, Peter Sloterdijk (2009, p.36).

A form of therapy initiated after the fall of communism for the continuously experienced post-traumatic shock is based on the rule of 'forgive and forget' devised by German intellectualists as a path to ultimate normalization. Their representatives demand not only an end to the post-war reckoning, but to recognize the deeds committed during war as morally 'purged' according to the principle 'let bygones be bygones'. This mental construct accentuates the notion that every human individual has a right to wiping off their guilt after walking down the path of redemp-

tion. The problem however resides in the fact that Germans of Jewish descent that survived the Holocaust do not share this sentiment, since their affective therapeutic path of post-war trauma settlement even though it includes forgiveness, does not include forgetting. That is why the confession of Günther Grass (2007) immersed in the therapeutic culture (Furedi, 2007) about his engagement with the Waffen-SS in his youth was met with strong opposition from them. G. Grass (2007) demanded that his adolescent choice be erased from the taboo catalogue and moved into a category of normalcy. By having this demand he not only reconstructs his own private vision of a new ideal well-being, but creates a prototypical expectation, for every German sharing his fate, to be included into a category of war victims, not the perpetrators. In the reconstructed vision of his own fate he sees himself as the prototypical victim of a cruel suffering caused by having to hide the truth from a crowd incapable of forgiveness. This suffering provides a legitimacy of a helpless victim and as such should be compensated in the social space by acknowledging him as a hero. Thus, in the post-historical narration strangeness is linked with an unforgiving and unforgetting 'dark crowd' that stands in the way of fulfilling a higher stage of returning to normalcy and equilibrium. The ideal well-being constructed by Grass (2007) is a prototypical mental construction for a society that lost a war and seeks an innocence alibi. Since Grass (2007) defines normalcy and the ultimate aim of normalization as a sense of fully integrated individual and social personality, in which each separate identities are not in mutual conflict, despite some of them being perpetrators of war crimes.

CONSTRUCTION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF POST-WAR TRAUMAS
AND CONFLICTS IN DISTRIBUTED COGNITION

Paths to psychological life normalization after war are extremely varied and depend on specific conditions a given society found itself in. Generally it depends on whether a given individual and society was or was positioned as either perpetrators or victims. However, the situation is not always clear, since some individuals and societies were classified in both categories or when the victors found themselves worse off than the defeated. For instance, the Polish road to normalization was and is, as already mentioned, completely opposite to that of the Germans and a lot more complicated because of how difficult and blurry it was to be unambiguously categorized as victors or defeated. This fact was the main reason for how difficult it was for Poles to find realistic life optimism (Schneider, 2001), since in the blurry reality establishing a simple fact such as what is rational and what is not, is not an easy task. The Polish road to normalcy cannot be described using the affective therapeutic model because of not only the blurry character of the role assigned to Poles, but also because of the blurry reality of the post-war day-to-day suspended between material shortages and relative safety, between peace and a next political crisis, etc.

Due to the geopolitical conditions Poles were not able to follow a normal path of achieving psychological equilibrium in the affective therapeutic model, hence only after 1989 the process of working through post-war trauma was possible. This huge delay accelerated the whole process. Generally speaking the process of normalization in Poland is mostly working through complexes that built up over the decades and generations following the war. Thus, post-war interpretation narrations moved the center of gravity away from a practical path of achieving psychological equilibrium towards a completely speculative, theoretical and intellectual sphere. Interpretation narrations of what is war trauma touched

upon conflicts centered around: dispute over the role of tradition in the present day, moral responsibility, manner and matter of expressing guilt and directions of desired and undesired normalization.

While looking for an answer on what is happiness and quality of life as an effect of a properly worked through war trauma, normal people will give a different one than intellectualists. The former mainly experience happiness and quality of life first and then try to understand it. The latter, however, first try to understand the meaning of happiness and quality of life and only then try to experience it. Thus, happiness and quality of life can be analyzed from two perspectives, either from an experiential or perceptional point of view (Gotlieb et al., 1994). In the experiential mode, happiness is an affective reaction to environmental factors and adaptive actions and as such indirectly influences action intent. In the cognitive mode, happiness is one of the components of mental reality processing and an effect of general expectation confirmation in relation to values and potential activity effects in life. Thus, from a cognitive perspective, happiness is a cognitive evaluation of happiness affordances attainability from the point of view of their confirmatory role in an individual's expectation realization of who he/she wants to be, should be or could be.

Affordances are objective life space resources encountered in an individual's immediate surrounding that enable or hinder actions within a specific goal structure (Zhang, Patel, 2006; Bańka, 2011). Despite the fact that affordances are objective properties of life environment when perceived as values they become subjective pressures for behaviors undergone in the environment. Perception and affordance realization is in this context a source of life satisfaction and openness to new identities. An individual can perceive and realize all sorts of affordances, such as: emotional, cognitive, mobility, social, cultural, interpersonal, lifestyle and developmental.

The concentration of affordances of a given type forms specific environments or rather social spaces such as: homeland, region, city, home or work places, each being a set of specific

offers determining the perceived quality of life. In various places a different concentration of aforementioned affordances occurs, creating what Zhang and Patel (2006) call the affordance space. Affordance space of life includes, on one hand – external cognitive representation spaces, and on the other hand – internal (mental) cognitive representation spaces, namely: knowledge, experience, fantasies, dreams and other ideas.

An individual in the process of perceiving and realizing external and internal life space affordances can either follow barriers/obstacles for action or possibilities for action enabled by affordances (Zhang & Patel, 2006). If individuals define representative spaces in categories of action, then life space affordance is disjunctive and quality of life, happiness and other forms of well-being are perceived as low. It means that mental spaces of cognitive representations and actual environment cognitive representation spaces are divergent. However, if individuals define their external and internal representation spaces in attainable actions categories and attractive possibilities, then affordance space is conjunctive and the perceived well-being is high. One of the effects of conjunctive affordance space is identifying with the living environment and generally with the surrounding actual life space, which manifests itself by a compatibility between place affordances and internal motivation as well as identity motivation. Furthermore, one of the effects of disjunctive affordance space is alienation from the surrounding reality and divergence between internal and identity motivation (see fig. 1).

As a result, people function simultaneously in two spaces – internal-mental and external-environmental. The surrounding reality includes actual and potential possibilities as immersed within determinants and goals of action (Gibson, 1979; Wilson, 2002). Perception and an assessment of environmental clues for solving everyday life tasks is a primary and most important motivation for making decisions by an individual – "what should I do with myself here?" or "where can I find more promising goals

and development potential?". Cognitive and emotional reality assessment contrasted with concepts and dreams about the future is the primary source of motivation to develop processes aimed at either adjusting within an actual life environment or escaping to a different alternative reality. Each individual lives simultaneously in two realities (Barsalou, 2009), which are a physical place as a set of physical, social and symbolic elements and a virtual place moved to either virtual reality (f.e. cyberspace) or to a mental space and embodied cognition (Barsalou, 2003; Niedenthal et al., 2009), as is the case with dreams, fantasies and illusions completely detached from reality (Taylor. 1989).

Wilson (2002) highlighted two types of embodied cognition – online and offline cognition. Online cognition as a situated cognition means that cognitive activities work adjacent to actual environment and within an external affordance space. What is perceived in online cognition is the specific life space affordances which realization thereof through experience is contrasted cognitively with an individual's identity developmental goals (Niedenthal et al., 2005). When the result of cognitive contrasting is assessed by the object in categories of positive adjustment towards expectations, then it results in a positive sense of well-being and quality of life in the affective-emotional sphere, additionally with a positive attitude towards one's surroundings in the behavioral sphere. In an opposite situation, meaning a negative assessment of happiness affordances in relation to expectations a transfer of cognition from a direct online sphere towards an offline sphere and internal affordance spaces (dreams, fantasies, illusions and other mental constructs) takes place. Offline processing refers to cognitive activity detached from the actual physical and social world. As a result of such detachment cognitive operations made prior in the actual life space are continued and sustained through information processing within an individual's organism (Niedenthal et al., 2005).

The Polish road to normalization after 1989 is characterized by a dichotomous history processing structure and constructing the future using two visions of ideal well-being. One vision of ideal well-being is realized in a conjunctive affordance space, the other in a disjunctive. The differences between them are demarcated, besides different relations with time, by a different relation with space as territory and borders. In this relation with time and space all the important Polish complexes of peripherality, provincialism and failure can be observed.

Figure 1. Schematic presentation of links between experiencing affordances in an actual (online) as well as mental (offline) space and constructing as well as reconstructing social space.

| | Assessment of happiness as well as quality of life affordances and identity distribution in life space | |
	Desired and expected self in a positive assessment of life space	Desired and expected self in a negative assessment of life space
External distributed cognition. Activity space and mental life experienced through affordance perception in an online reality.	– A positive assessment of happiness affordances in an actual reality enforces adjustment to a current place of activity, blocking in the cognitive system the perception of incentives to relocate the self in activity space. – A positive assessment of happiness affordances in an actual reality weakens a tendency to relocate the self in order to find a new place to realize life activity, stimulating the cognitive system to perceive barriers to change space and activity goals.	– A negative assessment of happiness affordances in an actual reality weakens adjustment to a current place of activity, facilitating in the cognitive system the tendency to perceive incentives to relocate the self and move activity goals to a new environment. – A negative assessment of happiness affordances in an actual reality facilitates a tendency to relocate the self in order to find a new place to realize life activity, stimulating the cognitive system to perceive barriers to anchor activity goals in relation to place.

| Internal distributed cognition.

Activity space and mental life experienced through a f f o r d a n c e perception in an offline reality situated in the mind or virtually. | – A positive assessment of happiness affordances in a mental space (offline) enforces adjustment to virtual reality and realizing activities in a simulative way, blocking in the cognitive system perception of incentives for allocation of self in a real activity space.
– A positive assessment of happiness affordances in a mental space (offline) weakens the tendency to relocate the self into an actual reality space and seeking within it a place of realizing desired life activities, stimulating the cognitive system to perceive barriers of personally significant activity goals. | – A negative assessment of happiness affordances in a mental space (offline) enforces seeking possibilities of adjustment to an actual reality and realizing within it activities in a real way, blocking in the cognitive system perception of incentives to allocate the self in an offline activity space.
– A negative assessment of happiness affordances in a mental space (offline) enforces the tendency to relocate the self into an actual reality space and seeking within it a place of realizing desired life activities, stimulating the cognitive system to perceive incentives for personally significant activity goals. |

In the conjunctive space, time is defined synchronously, meaning the history of individuals' and societies' life events is continuous and its duration is the basis for defining time-memory, place and experiencing its subjects' identity. In the disjunctive space time is defined asynchronously as a non-continuous set of jumping moments with a tendency to an extremely negative assessment of past events, be it in the form of history (f.e. Polish history) or national memory. Identity is built without proper roots in the past and the constructed visions of ideal well-being are faced solely towards the future and completely possessed with prospective memory.

In the conjunctive space the war space is a foundation for individual and collective identity recognition and is defined as a specific location with strictly defined territory borders, which

simultaneously play a role as individual's identity borders. War's territorial space with defined borders has assigned elements, which correspond with strictly determined collective and historical memory. Closed borders and territory provide a strong sense of individual identity – Me – and collective identity – We. Being part of collectively defined borders brings satisfaction and pride as well as stimulates cognitive curiosity for details about the history of events and places. Identity's immersion within territorial borders is not perceived as a barrier for realization of aspirations, furthermore conforming to the place's collective memory does not humiliate nor generate inferiority complex.

In the disjunctive space war space being a basis for collective and individual identity recognition is defined in fuzzy categories that enable positioning oneself as a citizen of a region, Europe and currently within the European Union borders. Identifying with the European territorial, social and cultural space dismisses borders of narrowly defined territories such as a state or national culture. This tendency, known in Poland before the war as the Gombrowicz-backwater complex, reemerged in the past two decades with great strength caused by the collapse of the Iron Curtain and an actual opening of borders. The vision of happiness and ideal well-being that assumes material wealth, automatic inclusion into higher culture, being part of the West and finally cutting ties with the despised East is a strong impulse to treating post-war territorial space as the proper European space. The former war space was pushed away getting the 'wild east' label in the European consciousness, where 'horrible things' happened contrary to what occurred in the West. In this space, every element like places are not bound together with the same historical time, collective memory and lastly, genetic code. Places like Wrocław have a completely replaced genetic code, whereas München is absolutely stabile. For people working through post-war trauma in the disjunctive space, borders and strictly defined territories are not factors constituting identity, cognitive curiosity nor, all the

more, sense of happiness and quality of life. Borders are a symbol of humiliation, psychological discomfort, cultural backwater, whereas openness, boundlessness or de-territorialization are a measure of new aspirations, sense of development and modernity. Life aspirations of progress and development definitely do not go hand in hand with interest in history as a collective event memory. History that follows objective truth or at least valuing equally war crimes done to different sides of the conflict (f.e. Poles and Jews) is treated as a hindrance in the realization of the idea of progressivism.

These two normalization trends are in stark contradiction though not necessarily symmetric hostility, however splitting the social war space in two irreconcilable camps. Goals of ideal well-being realized in the conjunctive affordance space follow a 'metanoia' path, whereas goals of well-being constructed and realized in the disjunctive space follow a 'metanoethical' path, where the epic character of pursued goals presents itself in the idea of Europeanization (Sloterdijk, 2009). Normalization through metanoia is always closely connected with online information processing, whereas the metanoethical path is always closely connected with offline processing. The latter is always a more abstract trauma processing and it is deeply immersed in a mentally constructed reality. Desired and expected self is realized by regular people usually in the actual online reality. In this perspective, the undesired and threatened self has a fate where there is no hope for achieving ideal well-being in an actual reality of life. However, trauma submitted to categories of 'fate' or 'destiny' does not lead to a loss of mental health, but rather to a syndrome of accepting the inevitable (Furedi, 2003). Desired and expected self, realized in a constructed offline life space, remains the domain of mainly dreamers and visionaries. Whereas the undesired and threatened self, formed in an offline constructed life space remains the domain of mainly ideological fighters, all kinds of visionaries, self-proclaimed prophets, individuals with a 'mission'

or possessed by ruminative thinking that try to force their values and affordances onto the social space.

Thinking about affordances of well-being as objects and events constructed in a mind of a human experiencing trauma, and not as situational affordances (Cantor, 2000) creates the same physical states as in the case of real affordances. This stirs up new conflicts with a very distant and unreal second war. Thus, for example, perceiving specific symbols of hostile affordances in a culture space an individual can react the same way as he/she reacts to concrete attributes, objects or events in the socio-physical life environment. An example of this can be a very real dispute between two historians – Norman Davies and Snyder – about the World War II Museum in Gdańsk. A state of strong psychological deterioration that afflicts people in a secondary social conflict with a distant war in its background is equally funny and dangerous because it pushes individuals to set the world on fire if only to prove they are right. Perceptive and anticipatory simulation of reality in offline processing allows an individual to create in a notion space various scenarios related with desired life spaces and possible forms of being in the world as a person and simultaneously as a 'paragon of happiness' for others. Online world processing gives a beginning to choices regarding the reality in which an object wants to develop or relocate his/her identity, but ultimately the decisions are dependent on offline reality processing, since its important aspect is introspective analysis (Niedenthal et al., 2005; 2009). It is the main generator of negative affects, prejudices and unbridgeable differences that are most direly exemplified by ethnophobia and ethnophilia as the foundations of modern conflicts and culture wars (Kołakowska, 2012).

RESOLVING POST-WAR CONFLICTS THROUGH DIALOGUE IN
DISTRIBUTED COGNITION

World War II was a tragic event in the history of the world still
affecting people who try to overcome its effects with no hope for
this process to ever end. The more we distance ourselves from the
events that caused war trauma, the less chance to find a consensus
on what these events were, how to interpret and work through
them. What seemed simple right after the traumatic incident (e.g.
who was the perpetrator and who was the victim) after several
dozen years becomes a free mental construct allowing one group
to seek happiness through being victims and suggesting that the
other group relive shame and guilt. The problem is that the ben-
efits and new mental costs have no real or objective link with the
events of the past. They are a product of a general provisional
culture and provisional identity trend (Hill, 1996).

The post-war trauma is being overcome on an individual level
as well as across entire societies through characterizing critical
point sequences, roles played in the war and roles assigned during
normalization process and in time of the current so-called 'peace'.
People that play in a feature film, dressed in appropriate uniforms
depict a reality where not 'Us' but 'They' are the perpetrators of
evil. Overcoming post-war trauma is a process of regaining psy-
chological equilibrium, which at generational and cultural levels
is undertaken periodically and corrected within the bounds of
individual and collective identity interpretation (Barakat, Zyck,
2009; Pinkerton, 2012; Sakai, 2009). Reality perceived by people
is bivalent by nature – either extremely pessimistic or extremely
optimistic (Schneider, 2001). Hence, after the war, people live in
a fuzzy reality that engages them unintentionally in post-conflicts
(Sakai, 2009), which are not actually real conflicts (Coser, 2009).
The intensity of a post-conflict as a secondary conflict can as-
sume a form of a pathological dissent (Lewin 1940, 1997; Finlay,
2005) manifesting itself through, besides extreme emotionality

(de Jong, 2002), aggressive symbolical terror (Harpham, 2002). Post-conflicts as an echo of actual wars become a secondary cause for new and actual threats (Wheen, 2009).

The post-war individual, collective and national identities normalization even with good intentions in mind, in the long-run can lead to such large distortions of the original events that the process of regaining equilibrium transforms into its contradiction defined as collective paranoia (Kramer, 2008) or political paranoia. An example of such is when the former perpetrators of Holocaust in Europe spread ethnophobia by accusing the former victims of islamophobia within a very one-sided understanding of public health (de Jong, 2004). In a situation where the categories of 'perpetrator' and 'victim' are so freely shuffled a question arises – what is to be done with it? How to tackle this new form of social conflicts, which are war post-conflicts (Deutsch, Coleman, 2005) all the more complicated in a globalized world.

Answers to these questions can be sought in a multitude of valuable theoretical clues that emerged recently. One of them is the concept of softening unrealistic optimism and unrealistic pessimism in perception and experiencing happiness and optimal well-being ('well-enough') (Schneider, 2001; Lorion, 2000). This softening means, first and foremost, looking for a realistic perception of ones affiliation to good and evil, being perpetrator and victim, suffering and happiness or ethnic superiority and ethnic disadvantage (Cairns, Roe, 2003; Wright et al. 1990).

The article presented two mechanisms of constructing and reconstructing post-war trauma: the affective therapeutic model and distributed cognition. In the affective therapeutic model overcoming trauma is achieved through constructing and reconstructing social space as a result of redefining ideal well-being. Unfortunately, this mechanism although most widespread after World War II proved to be completely ineffective in resolving conflicts, health promotion and promoting peace. The affective therapeutic mechanism of resolving conflicts has a tendency of automatically

creating control milieu (Lifton, 1989), in which the ideologization of thought reform and interpersonal communication takes place. Overcoming trauma becomes a means of acquiring leverage, power and manipulation through capitalizing on suffering as an asset (Furedi, 2003; Illouz, 2007). Overcoming injustice, suffering and trauma on one side (de Jong, 2004) as well as overcoming guilt individually and collectively on the other (Grass, 2007; Sloterdijk, 2009) leads to a concentration on emotions as esteemed values in their own right. Based on a sophisticated sensitivity and vulnerability the next step is creating a system of total manipulation in the form of guilty milieu and shame milieu, serving to exercise efficient power by hating, self-hating, symbolic self-surrender and pedagogy of shame.

People trapped in the affective therapeutic mechanism of regaining equilibrium instead of the promised liberation get locked in an even bigger continuous conflict. On one hand it is a growing pressure for self-exposure and cult of confession by martyrs, and on the other hand a growing self-punitive tendency and punishing others by martyr-judges according to a principle described by Camus "... the more I accuse myself, the more I have a right to judge you." A stark example of this is conscious cleansing used by Peter Sloterdijk (2009, p. 36): "It has won back the trust of its neighbors – if we ignore a few poisoned depots in England and Poland where anti-German emotions reproduce anaerobically as were – and there too, where forgiveness is beyond the realms of what is humanly possible, it has evoked a certain respect as to its metamorphosis". This way the aggressive confessor feels entitled to the ultimate assertion that "...Germany's long expected entry into the manifest stage of its normalization whereby one has to admit that this will be, after such long deformation of history, a paradoxical first-time-round normality" (Sloterdijk, 2009, p. 38).

A much better foundation for resolving individual and social conflicts is the distributed cognition diagram presented before. Contrary to the affective therapeutic model, resolving conflicts

through dialogue in the distributed cognition model does not reprogram autobiographic memory or people's history according to some doctrinal logic. Constructing and reconstructing social space in the process of overcoming trauma relies not on modeling behaviors as reactions to reality, but on cognitive behavior modeling on foundations of internal and social trust. The basis for overcoming trauma and its conflict-generating effects is private ownership of the mind and its products – imagination, perceived affordances or memory. Individuals and groups in dialogue in distributed cognition move to a level of communicating with their own past through seeking common happiness affordance spaces by collective and individual retention of common ideas and emotions.

Resolving conflicts in the distributed cognition model does not force individuals or groups to any confession, struggling with their own sense of integrity and penance. Furthermore the ultimate moral vision of vulnerability does not become an ultimate science. A stress on discovering the same affordances and forming a common allowable space of affordances liberates minds from concentrating on barriers as sources of interpersonal differences. Forming a common cognitive base through retaining alternative to the therapeutic model ideas is not the, described by Hollander (1992) process of closing one's mind in an illusive pursuit of total happiness, but an expression of truth and remaining in internal harmony. These alternative visions depend upon such things as strengths of previous identity, the penetration of social peace affordances by outside ideas, and the retained capacity for individual and social renewal.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The search for theoretical framework useful in resolving internal and social conflicts with direct or indirect post-war trauma background has a long tradition in the 20th century psychology (f.e. Kurt Lewin (1940/1997) being the absolute pioneer). His concept of resolving social conflicts and field theory as social science for a long time became a theoretical framework of coping with social conflicts (Coser, 2009) developed by other researchers. However in the last three decades this concept was completely supplanted by PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) theories (Lis-Turlejska, 1998; Zawadzki, Popiel, 2014). As was already pointed out the PTSD concept and the therapeutic culture that is based on it (Furedi, 2003) not only exhausted its agency in resolving internal and social modern conflicts but became, in the current fuzzy reality (Schneider, 2001), a dysfunctional formula that causes more evil than good. The article proposes a new cognitive theoretical framework of resolving trauma and related social conflicts that is based on the concept of distributed cognition.

The presented distributed cognition theoretical framework uses cognitive representations of social reality in mental life space (Zhang, Patel, 2006; Bańka, 2016). In this concept distributed cognition is a cognitive system which structure is distributed between internal-mental and external-objective world representations across time and space. The primary issue of distributed cognition is that distribution, transformation and spread of information in each cognitive component functions as a systemic whole. It means that a change in any of the system's elements causes the whole system to alter its behavior. An approach presented in the article to distributed cognition that is based on cognitive representations makes use of the J.J. Gibson's (1979) affordance theory. The way distributed cognition has been formulated was used to present the dual mode of processing information about the world, that on one hand is based on experiencing reality online and on the other

hand is based on experiencing social reality from a perspective of desired and expected self vs. unwanted and threatened self. The article explains how in light of these two modes of information processing a dialogical construction and reconstruction of social space as an effect of constant redefining ideal well-being in the minds of individuals takes place. Summing up, the presented issue of constructing and reconstructing social space is treated as a consequence of repeated attempts to define happiness and restoring social framework of the current perfect dream.

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